From: Eric Holliday
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/29/02 1:04am
Subject: Interoperability

To whom it concerns,

I am an Apple Computer user. Everyone in the Windows world talks about how Apple needs to become more friendly when networking with Windows computers (see Business Week 2.0 article at http://www.business2.com/articles/web/0,1653,37236,FF.html) as well as other interoperability issues. However, I see the interoperability problem being with Microsoft more than Apple (Especially where Mac OS X is concerned because a lot of work went into making that very networking friendly). Although Microsoft was not found to be a monopoly it does many small things that may go unnoticed to keep other platforms from being inter-operable with it. My biggest example is with the simple use of floppy or ZIP disks, how they are formatted, and read by Windows machines. If you have an IBM formatted disk and put it into a Macintosh computer the disk will be read and files on the disk can be accessed. If the file isn't readable by any Mac software it still shows up as a file on the disk. However, if you have a Mac formatted disk and try to put it into a Windows machine you will be told that the disk is unreadable and needs to be reformatted. With that you are given the option to eject or initialize the disk. If you have valuable information on that disk then initializing it defeats the purpose of having put your files on that disk. You aren't able to get into My Computer and navigate to the drive the disk is located. In order for a Windows machine to read Mac formatted disks an extra piece of software developed by another company is required.

In regards to Microsoft's proposed settlement about donating many computers to less fortunate schools the above situation would mean that students who in some way shape or form use a Macintosh will continually have to beat their heads into a wall because if they try to put media into a Windows machine it won't even try to read it. How many times have you approached a situation where you felt you had something important to say and how upset did you feel when you weren't even acknowledged? Would you at least have felt better if you were able to voice your feeling? Windows doesn't let you voice your feeling.

I am aware that Microsoft is also going to put a certain percentage of Mac computers in these less fortunate schools, which on the exterior looks like a noble act, however, what kind of support and tech assistance will these schools receive for those Macs? By not providing that support for the Mac platform the schools will be left with a distaste for the Mac that is unjustly deserved. This will lead them to ask for Windows computers.

Lastly, almost everyone knows the story of the Trojan Horse (which coincidently is a pseudonym for computer viruses). If Microsoft is allowed to go through with their proposal they are able to break into an area where they still don't have control over the market under the guise

of peace. This gets them through the market without a fight. History may repeat itself and we are supposed to learn from it. Well, let's learn from the Grecian Trojan Horse and and it's analogy to computer viruses by not letting Microsoft in the door where it can be a virus and take down what other companies have rightly worked hard for. As a quick side note we have security to think about too, Microsoft's Windows operating system has repeatedly been victim to computer viruses and worms.

Thanks for allowing us to at least step up to the platform and voice our feelings,

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